

Praying with Power
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We've been preaching a series entitled Starting the Year off Right. Today I'm preaching on Praying with Power. I want to teach you how to experience God's supernatural power in your life through the power of prayer.

Prayer is not some mysterious thing – it is simply talking to God. The primary purpose of prayer is getting to know God. But there is power in prayer.

I encourage you to live your life as though it depended upon prayer.
 You know why? Because it does!
 Prayer acknowledges our weakness and God's power.
 Prayer admits we can't but declares God can!
 Prayer gets you out of the natural and into the supernatural.

Here's the first thing I want you to see today: nothing happens in the kingdom of God until somebody prays. James said it best in James 4:2

You do not have, because you do not ask God.

There are some things we will only receive and achieve if we pray.

No one is saved unless he prays. – Who ever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

No one receives wisdom unless he asks for it – If any man lacks wisdom let him ask of God.

No one is filled with the Spirit without asking.

Jonah didn't get out of the whale until he prayed!
 Peter didn't get out of prison until the church prayed!
 Hannah did not have a child until she prayed!

I can tell you right now with total certainty that there are gifts from God we have not received because we haven't asked.

- There are battles we have not won because we haven't prayed.
- There are people who won't be saved unless we pray for them.
- There are lives that won't change without the power of prayer.

So today, I'm going to give you seven keys to increase the release of God's power through prayer. Praying is one thing – but when we add these seven things, we increase the release of God's power.

1- We increase the release of God's power by adding faith to our prayers.

James 1:6-7 says:

When you pray, you must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.

You can pray 24/7 – but if you do not add faith to your prayers you will not receive anything from God.

Matthew 13:58 says that Jesus could not do many miracles in his hometown because of their lack of faith. Whenever Jesus healed someone, He asked them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They would say I want to see or hear or walk. Then Jesus would answer their prayer and say, “Your faith has healed you.”

What if the lame man only asked Jesus for a cane instead of healing?
 What if the blind man only asked Jesus for a guide dog instead of sight?
 What if the deaf only asked Jesus for a hearing aid instead of hearing?
 What if the demon possessed only asked Jesus for an anti-depressant instead of freedom?
 They would have all missed out on the supernatural power of God.
 What are you missing out on because of small faith?
 So, when you pray, pray big prayers in faith!

2- We increase the release God’s power by adding agreement to our prayers.

Matthew 18:19 says:

Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

If there is power when one prays, there is more power when two pray. Deut. 32:30 says one can chase a thousand, but two can put ten thousand to flight. There’s even more power when the whole church prays. If you need the supernatural power of God, don’t hang around people who don’t pray in faith. Find you some believers who will pray in faith with you and experience the exponential power of agreement.

3- We increase the release of God’s power by praying in the name of Jesus.

Jesus said in John 14:14

You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.

Praying in Jesus’ name is not praying your will and tacking the name of Jesus on the end of your prayer. When you do something in someone’s name – you do their will. So, when we pray in Jesus name, we pray like Jesus would pray. It like WWJD – what would Jesus do – but it’s WWJP – what would Jesus pray?

- What did Jesus do every time the sick asked for healing? He healed them. So - In the name of Jesus we pray for the sick to be healed.
- What did Jesus do every time the possessed asked for deliverance? He set them free. So - In the name of Jesus we pray for the bound up to be freed up.
- In the name of Jesus we pray for supernatural miracles.

Praying in His name means praying His will.

4- We increase the release of God's power by praying the will of God.

1 John 5:14-15 says:

This is the confidence we have before Him: whenever we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked Him for.

people say, "There's the problem, I don't pray with confidence because I don't know the will of God." That's why you need to spend time in the word of God.

The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth as you are in the Word of God. The Word of God and the Spirit of God reveal to us the will of God. Then we can pray in confidence!

5- We increase the release God's power by praying the Word.

Think about that. There is power in prayer and there is power in the Word. So, there is multiplied power when we combine the Word and prayer.

When I pray for something, I try to find a promise in the Bible to pray:

- If I'm sick, I pray the word - by His stripes I am healed.
- If I'm bound by something, I pray the word - He who the Son sets free is free indeed.
- If I'm afraid, I pray the word - God has not given me a spirit of fear.
- If I have a financial need, I pray the word - God will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The Word works, but it's got to be put to work.
And it's put to work when we pray it in faith!

6- We increase the release of God's power by adding fasting to prayer.

Matthew 17:14-21 tell the story of how Jesus cast a demon out and His disciples asked him why they couldn't do it. He said,

This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

There is power in prayer, but that power is multiplied when we fast. Jesus assumed prayer and fasting would be part of our lives, just like giving. In Matthew 6:2, He said, “*When you give,*” not *if* you give. He also said, “*When you pray and fast,*” not *if* you pray and fast. Jesus assumed we would all be givers. Jesus assumed we would all tap into the power of God by praying and fasting on a regular basis.

There are Different Types of Fasts in the Bible.

- **The Disciples’ Fast** (Matthew 17:21) – For deliverance from sin, addiction, bondage.
- **The Ezra Fast** (Ezra 8:21-23) – For God’s help in solving problems and for protection from Satan.
- **The Samuel Fast** (1 Samuel 7:6) - For deliverance and revival.
- **The Elijah Fast** (1 Kings 19:4-8) – For freedom from emotional problems for supernatural strength.
- **The Widow’s Fast** (1 Kings 17:9-16) – Fasting to provide for the needy.
- **The Paul Fast** (Acts 9:9) - For physical healing and to get direction from God.
- **The John the Baptist Fast** (Luke 1:15) - To enhance our walk with God and our witness to people.
- **The Esther Fast** (Esther 4:16) – For protection from the evil one.
- **The Jesus Fast** (Matthew 4:1-2) - For spiritual power and victory over temptation, the flesh and the devil.
- **The Daniel Fast** (Daniel 1: 5-21; 10:3) – Fasting for health and to seek God’s favor, purpose and vision for life.

Ways to Fast

Liquid Fast – Water or juice only

Absolute Fast – Absolutely no food or water (Caution: Should not be undertaken over 3 days and only if you are in good health).

Partial Fast – This could mean fasting certain meals of the day or abstaining from certain kinds of foods (i.e.: No meat or sweets, soup only, fruit and vegetables only, etc.)

Corporate Fast – A church or group of people who feel God has called them to fast together for a certain period of time.

Fasting and Abstinence — Although the word “fast” is used as abstaining from food in the Bible, during a fast one can practice abstinence from other pleasures as well, such as entertainment, social media, hobbies or sex, as spoken about in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.

Fasting Plus Prayer — Remember, fasting should be combined with prayer. God called us to fast and pray. If you are fasting a certain meal of the day, use the time you would normally be eating to pray. The combination of prayer and fasting is a powerful way to focus on seeking God for breakthroughs and answers to prayer.

7- We increase the release of God’s power by praying in the Spirit.

Who wants to be limited to praying what we can understand? Not me. There is a way to pray that goes beyond the limits of our own understanding. It’s called praying in the spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:13-15 says:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.

Paul said to multiply prayer power by praying with our understanding and praying in the spirit. When we pray with our understanding, we are limited by our understanding. But when we pray in the spirit – there are no limits!

I don’t know about you, but there are times in my life when I just don’t know how to pray or what to pray. There are situations beyond my ability to understand! What do I do in those times? I pray in the Spirit.

Thank God for that gift where you can pray knowing that the perfect will of God is being prayed and the power of God is released. Romans 8:26-27 says:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

This verse is not about tongues, but it shows us a principle that when we pray in the spirit, our born-again spirit is united with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit prays the perfect will of God through us. What can be more powerful than the Holy Spirit interceding for you!

Praying in the Spirit is not gibberish, it’s not meaningless, it is not emotionalism

and it is not a less important gift of the Spirit. This prayer language is not a learned language. In fact, the mind does not understand what is being prayed. So, the meaning of what we are praying is unknown to us, but it is not unknown to God.

I'll never forget when I saw a report on ABC's Nightline about what researchers at the University of Pennsylvania discovered when they did a study on what happens in people's brains when they speak in tongues.

The frontal lobes of our brains show increased activity when we are focused on what we are saying. So, the researchers took images of people's brains during different kinds of spiritual activities – like praying, worshipping and meditating. The researchers discovered that when people sang or prayed, there was increased activity in the frontal lobes of the brain. When they scanned the brains of nuns praying and Buddhist monks meditating – they also saw increased activity in the frontal lobes.

However, when they scanned the brains of those speaking in tongues – there was less frontal lobe activity – which confirms that the words spoken while praying in the spirit come from a source other than the mind of the person speaking in tongues. Science proves what the Bible said 2,000 years ago – when you pray in the spirit, your mind is unfruitful – or literally – barren. But the Holy Spirit is praying the perfect will of God through you!

We believe God has called us to touch heaven and change earth. We do that in worship but we also do that in prayer. I believe God can take ordinary men and women who will pray and literally change the world.

In the great book entitled *If you Want to Walk on Water, You've got to Get out of the Boat!* John Ortberg tells a true story about the power of prayer in an ordinary man's life. Bob was an insurance salesman in Washington D.C. who became a Christian and was discipled by a friend. When Bob learned about prayer, he got excited about the passage that says, "Ask whatever you will in My name, and you will receive it."

He took that literally and said, "Great! Then I gotta start praying for something. I think I'll pray for Kenya." He had never been to Kenya. He did not know anyone in Kenya. Bob just wanted to pray for Kenya.

So, a friend challenged Bob to pray for Kenya every day for 30 days. Bob began to pray and for a long time nothing happened. Then one night he attended a dinner in Washington where he met a lady who helped run one of the largest orphanages in Kenya. Instantly, Bob began to ask her questions about her work.

The woman said, "You're obviously very interested in my country. Have you ever been there?" No. "Do you know someone in Kenya?" No. "Then why are you so curious?"

Bob told her he had been praying for Kenya. So she invited him to fly over and see their work. Bob took her up on the offer and flew over. He was appalled and saddened to see the poverty and limited resources.

When he returned to Washington, he wrote some drug companies and asked them to donate unused drugs to the orphanage in Kenya. He soon had over \$1 million worth of donated supplies sent over. It was such a major contribution that they flew Bob to Kenya and threw a big party in his honor. Even the president of Kenya attended. He quickly struck up a friendship with Bob and invited him to his palace and took him on a tour of Nairobi.

While touring Nairobi Bob saw a group of prisoners. He asked the president why they were in prison. The president said they were political prisoners who disagreed with his philosophy of governing. Bob told him, "That's a bad idea. You should let them out." The President said nothing. They finished their tour and Bob flew home.

Not long after he returned to the U.S., Bob received a call one night. The caller said, "Bob, this is the State Dept. Have you been to Kenya recently?" Yes. "Bob, did you happen to meet with the president of Kenya while you were there?" Yes. "Bob, did you say anything to the president about political prisoners?" Yes. "Bob, those are political prisoners we have been working to free for a very long time. Bob, what did you say to the president?" Bob said, "I told him it was a bad idea and he should let them out." The State Dept. spokesman then said, "Well Bob, whatever you said worked because they have been freed. So, thanks."

So what about Bob? More importantly, what about the God to whom Bob prayed? God can do some amazing things when ordinary people pray in faith. Bob was just an ordinary guy who prayed and believed and then put action to his prayers. God changed Bob and God changed Kenya.

There is power in prayer. I want to challenge you to pray every day for the next 30 days for whatever it is you need God to do in you or for you or through you.

Deb and I have done this many times. In fact, we did that years ago and at the end of 30 days, we had the word from God to start this church. No telling what exciting adventures God may have in store for you! I guarantee you if you pray every day for 30 days something will be changed, even if that something is you!

Think of the prayers God answered in the Bible:

- Moses prayed and God reversed His judgment against Israel.
- Isaiah prayed and the sun stood still.
- Nehemiah prayed and God used him to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.
- Solomon prayed and the glory of God filled the temple.
- The early Christians prayed and angels got Peter out of prison.

- Paul and Silas prayed in prison and an evangelistic service took place.
- Elijah prayed and it didn't rain for 3 and a half years.

Don't think God answered these people's prayers because they were super saints! James 5:16-18 says:

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

People just like us can pray prayers that are powerful and effective. There is supernatural power in prayer.

How do we tap into that power? We increase the release of God's power by praying in the spirit – praying the word – praying in agreement – praying in faith – fasting and praying for God's will in Jesus' name.

But none of these things will help you today unless you start praying.

So stop talking about it and just start praying in Jesus' name!!!